



Proposed Modifications to the Pennsylvania Avenue/ I-295 Interchange



Proposed Modifications to Pennsylvania Avenue west of the Capitol

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Roadway Modification

Pennsylvania Avenue is a “mature” urban road, bordered nearly its entire way by residences, commercial businesses, office buildings, government and institutional buildings, historic structures, and dedicated parkland. Other than a rare vacant or under-developed lot, there is virtually no land along the roadway corridor that is undeveloped or not designated as parkland. Within this built urban environment, little if any alteration of roadway alignment can be made without the taking of property, an action that usually has substantial ramifications.

Except during the weekday peak commuter travel periods, Pennsylvania Avenue, as a broad multi-lane facility, can adequately and safely handle traffic volumes associated with local travel, visitors to the city, and shopping, entertainment, or other trips to the downtown area by residents of the region. Given the adequate capacity of the Avenue to handle traffic volumes in all but the most congested peak hours, its proximity to valuable resources, and physical constraints that would be encountered to alter the highway alignment or design, it is not recommended that major modifications be made to the roadway alignment or basic design in the implementation of this Corridor Management Plan.

This does not mean that all alterations of the roadway alignment or design would necessarily be incompatible. Minor improvements at specific locations may be appropriate, such as accommodating left turn traffic movements or providing additional parking. Likewise, minor alterations in roadway alignment at specific parks or other locations (such as has been suggested within the Capitol Hill neighborhood) may be implemented as part of other community planning initiatives to strengthen community identity, quality, or sense of place. Any such alterations or modifications should take into account the need to protect and enhance the intrinsic resources that characterize the Avenue as a Scenic Byway.

Recommendations

- Give priority to maintaining roadway surfaces, sidewalks, lighting, signage, striping, drainage, landscaping, street tree maintenance and replacement, and other physical components of the byway. Require timely and quality construction work when repairs or excavations are made. Litter and trash pick-up services should also have priority.
- Conduct a survey of the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor to assess parking area locations and capacities to identify possible parking improvements, particularly those that would serve visitors to the Scenic Byway. Such improvement projects should be included in the District Department of Transportation’ Capital Improvement Plan.
- Within the West End segment, consider allowing left turns at Pennsylvania and 17th Street during non-rush hours.
- Within the Monumental Core segment (if allowed following consideration of security needs), open E Street at both ends, and remove parking in the vicinity of 14th Street.
- Resolve the vehicle restrictions in front of the White House. Either reopen Pennsylvania Avenue at this location or restrict vehicles permanently with an attractive design that provides effective traffic flow.
- On Capitol Hill, in conjunction with local initiatives, consider the feasibility of Avenue redesign to turn squares into parks at Seward Square and Eastern Market.
- Explore means to reduce peak hour traffic flows across Sousa Bridge. This effort may involve a traffic study of Pennsylvania Avenue and contributing highways and local roads.
- East of the River, enforce speed limits and explore traffic-calming measures.



Reduce peak hour traffic flows across Sousa Bridge



DC Ducks Motor Tour



Wide Sidewalks and Allees of Street Trees



Washington Globe Lights

Streetscape Treatments

A streetscape is the overall impression made by the design, arrangement, and relationship of structures, landscaping, and open space along a street within a block or neighborhood. Streets that attract people tend to offer interesting things to do. They also tend to provide pedestrian-friendly amenities, such as decorative paving or brick sidewalks, trees and planters, gardens and other landscaping, a mix of uses and facades, colorful stores and shops, benches, outdoor cafes, and lighting on a human scale.

The importance of streetscapes is well recognized within the city. The District Department of Transportation has promulgated Downtown Streetscape Regulations for an area immediately north of Pennsylvania Avenue, east of the White House, south of M Street NW, and west of Union Station. Streetscape improvements are among the responsibilities of DDOT. DDOT has been working with the East of the River Task Force to develop an appropriate streetscape plan along Pennsylvania Avenue in that area. The DC Downtown Business Improvement District also has an active interest in streetscape design.

Recommendations

- Develop a streetscape plan for Pennsylvania Avenue with appropriate treatment for the appearance and needs of the byway segments, districts or neighborhoods. Some similar elements may repeat throughout the entire route.
- Develop lighting recommendations in combination with the streetscape plan. Strive for consistency in lighting within each segment and, as use a family of light fixtures (e.g., Washington Globe lights), within the entire corridor, depending on local surroundings and safety needs.
- Conduct a survey of the byway to identify areas where improved street lighting would enhance the roadway.

- In coordination with DDOT, National Park Service, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Casey Tree Foundation, and other agencies and organizations as appropriated, additional street trees should be planted along the corridor in parks, medians, green spaces, and walkways. Identify locations where new plantings, either in the ground or in planters, would make the byways and sites more appealing to tourists and local residents.
- In the area near and east of Eastern Market, approximately between South Carolina Avenue SE and Potomac Avenue SE, coordinate streetscape improvements with Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.
- Provide landscape enhancement at Barney Circle to create an attractive green space on the west side of Sousa Bridge.
- East of the river, explore the possible installation of attractive, human-scale lighting.

Multi-Modal Strategy

Although Pennsylvania Avenue can adequately handle vehicular traffic volumes associated with visitor and tourist demand, using the roadway as a means of viewing, accessing or experiencing scenic sites can be a daunting task. Traffic volumes, traffic signals, turning vehicles and turning restrictions, double-parked delivery vehicles, pedestrian crossings, and the need to navigate a non-contiguous urban scenic byway will present a visiting driver with a considerable challenge, especially if the driver is trying to enjoy the scenic views as well. Given that many visitors to the city would likely be unfamiliar with the scenic route, attempting to follow the designated byway in heavy traffic conditions and locating parking would add to the challenge of visiting the sites. Fortunately, alternatives to experiencing the Pennsylvania Avenue Scenic Byway by private automobile exist. These modes of transportation include Metro Rail and Metro Bus, bus tours, bicycling,

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and even walking the 7-mile scenic route. Use of these modes presents a number of advantages. Traffic congestion and delays are reduced for drivers, and the byway users can choose modes of travel that give them the comfort they desire while experiencing the byway's resources that interest them. Using alternative modes reduces or eliminates the time and costs spent locating parking and provides greater freedom to move from one site to another. Each alternative mode is addressed below along with recommendations to promote their use for traversing the byway.

Metro Rail and Metro Bus

The District of Columbia and surrounding areas are fortunate in possessing one of the finest subway systems in North America. The 102-mile Metro Rail system, operated by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), serves Washington and the northern Virginia and southern Maryland suburbs with frequent, dependable transit service. All five of the Metro lines (orange, blue, red, green and yellow) converge in downtown Washington with Metro lines crossing the Avenue at four locations and 13 subway stations located within a ten-minute walk of Pennsylvania Avenue. While the segment east of the Anacostia River is not Metro accessible, nearly the entire byway west of the Anacostia River is within 1,500 feet of a Metro station. Frequent public bus service is provided by WMATA along Pennsylvania Avenue from other areas of the city and suburbs.

Motor Tours

There are a variety of privately operated tour buses, vans, and limousines available to visitors, whether they come as individuals or in large groups. Guided tours allow tourists to view many sites without having to drive in an unfamiliar city and locate parking at every site to be visited. City-wide tours can be valuable to a visitor interested in a general view of DC, while theme-specific tours can

offer more in-depth information regarding focused topics such as the National Monuments and museums, African-American heritage or the city's architecture. Motor coach tours are provided by companies such as America's Capital Tour and Gray Line Tours, and van and limousine tours are provided by DC V.I.P. Tours. There are also fixed route tours, which permit access to tour vehicles from designated stops for tourists who wish to visit sites at their own pace. Such tours and transportation are provided by the Tourmobile, which is under a concession contract with the National Park Service, and Old Town Trolley Tours and Gray Line Tours. Tour information from many of these operators indicates that sites along Pennsylvania Avenue, such as the Old Post Office and the FBI Building, are served and that short portions of the Avenue are used in fixed tour routes. Pennsylvania Avenue can safely accommodate conventional tour buses.

Bicycling

In the Washington, DC metropolitan area, bicycling is an important recreational activity and, to a limited degree, a means of commuting to work. The Metro rail system allows customers to carry bicycles on board trains, thus expanding and facilitating bicycle use in the area. Bike routes throughout Washington, DC, are shown on a commercially available Washington Regional Bike Map, sponsored by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. The District has designated official on-road bikeways; however, Pennsylvania Avenue is not an official bikeway. There are other, unofficial bikeways that were recommended by bicyclists. These routes were reviewed by local governments and deemed safe for prudent, adult users. Only short segments of Pennsylvania Avenue are shown as part of these routes, particularly around and immediately west of the Capitol. The "unofficial route" category is applied to some intersecting streets, including Potomac Avenue and Minnesota Avenue.

Metro Rail Stations Providing Best Access to the Pennsylvania Avenue Byway

Orange or Blue Lines

Foggy Bottom
Farragut West
McPherson Square
Metro Center
Federal Triangle
Eastern Market
Potomac Avenue

Red Line

Metro Center
Union Station

Yellow/Green Lines

Archives/ Navy Memorial



Metrorail Map



Wide Sidewalks in the Monumental Core



Pedestrian Amenities: Street Trees and Benches

Regional multi-use trails that accommodate bikes include: the Capital Crescent Trail from Georgetown to northwest Maryland; the C&O Canal tow path trail from Georgetown to western Maryland; and the Rock Creek Park trail from the National Mall to Chevy Chase and Bethesda, Maryland. The National Mall and surrounding National Park Service parklands, the Fort Circle Parks and some parkland along the Anacostia River also contain multi-use trails. A new trail, the Metropolitan Branch Trail, is under design and will provide a bikeway from Union Station to Takoma Park in the northeastern portion of the District and Silver Spring, Maryland; it will also link to a future northern extension of the Capital Crescent Trail and to the Northwest Branch Trail in Prince George's County, Maryland. Additional bicycle trails are being incorporated into the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative.

Bicycling the entire length of Pennsylvania Avenue is only encouraged when dedicated, safe bikeways become available the entire length of the Byway. In the meantime, it is possible to bicycle to many of the byway's resources. For example, bicycling is popular along the wide footpaths of the National Mall, especially on weekends or summer evenings. Because the Mall is connected to the Capital Crescent, Rock Creek, and C&O Canal trails, and to the system of trails in Arlington and Northern Virginia via the Memorial and Key Bridges, it also serves as an ideal regional gateway for bicyclists to the some of the most noted resources of the Pennsylvania Avenue Scenic Byway. From the Mall, relatively safe access to the Ellipse and, via East Executive Avenue, to Lafayette Square is possible for viewing the White House. Similar access via north-south streets carrying relatively lower volumes of traffic, such as 10th Street and 6th Street, can be made to sites between the Capitol and White House. The numerous roadways, paths, and walkways surrounding the Capitol also lend themselves to bicycle use.

Certain wide portions of the Avenue may lend themselves to designated bicycle lanes. These sections include the Avenue from the Anacostia River to Independence Avenue on Capitol Hill, which is characterized by wide, multiple travel lanes and a wide, raised median area. Another section is from the Capitol to Western Plaza, which is characterized by wide travel lanes, limited parking, and an at-grade median. The portion from 15th Street to 17th Street NW, in front of the White House, where vehicular traffic is now restricted, could also be designated as a bikeway.

Designating a contiguous, safe, and clearly marked bikeway along the Avenue from the Anacostia River to the White House should be explored as part of implementing this plan. While portions of the Avenue east of the Anacostia River and in the West End may not have sufficient right-of-way, clearance, or lane widths to presently allow for bicycle lanes, future modification of some roadway elements should not be ruled out so that a bike lane or trail can be designated for the full length of Pennsylvania Avenue.

Walking

Almost the entire length of the Pennsylvania Avenue is paralleled by sidewalks. Only in a short section on the south side of the Avenue, adjacent to Fort Davis Park, between 33rd Street and Alabama Avenue SE, lacks a sidewalk. Pedestrians can safely navigate the entire length of the Scenic Byway, although caution is necessary in crossing heavily traveled streets. These streets include Minnesota Avenue, the on-ramp to the Anacostia Freeway, Independence and Constitution Avenues, 14th Street and 17th Street NW, and Washington Circle.

Experiencing the byway on foot can be a rewarding experience because it allows the pedestrian to spend as much time at individual sites as the walker desires. It also allows the pedestrian easy access to the details of a site, which can be rewarding for persons

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interested in, for example, architectural details of buildings, informative plaques and signs, and photographic and panoramic views. Walking also presents opportunities for byway users to readily experience the neighborhoods, culture and amenities of the city. Stopping for a snack at local restaurants, discovering new stores, and enjoying local cultural institutions brings the walker into close contact with city residents. Walking is also the way to experience the several DC Heritage Trails, which offer well-interpreted tours adjacent to Pennsylvania Avenue. By combining use of public transportation with walking, a Byway user can easily navigate nearly the entire length of the Byway in several hours.

Recommendations

- Coordinate with Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) for identifying the Pennsylvania Avenue Scenic Byway on neighborhood maps posted in Metro Rail stations and in public literature available from WMATA.
- Post directional signs by WMATA in appropriate Metro stations indicating that the Scenic Byway is a nearby destination.
- Identify the Scenic Byway in WMATA promotional and informational materials, where appropriate.
- Support and promote bicycle-Metro Rail connections.
- Develop an informational package for tour operators that highlights Pennsylvania Avenue as a destination or route and provide information on intrinsic resources, as needed.
- Identify and coordinate with local tour bus and van operators who would have interest in adding the Pennsylvania Avenue Scenic Byway as either a tour highlight or a separate tour.
- Identify and coordinate with long-distance and out-of-state tour bus operators who may use Pennsylvania Avenue as an access route to central Washington to determine their interest in highlighting the byway as buses enter or depart the city.

- Working with the City's Bicycle Advisory Committee, the Office of Planning, and bicycle advocacy groups such as the Washington Area Bicyclist Association, explore the feasibility of designating and signing portions of Pennsylvania Avenue as a bike trail. Implementation may require roadway modifications or restrictions, such as eliminating parking at critical locations.
- Coordinate with and support development of bicycle and pedestrian access from the Sousa Bridge through the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative.
- Develop and post directional signage or designate specific bicycle routes for bicyclists to safely access from the National Mall to byway resources along Pennsylvania Avenue between the Capitol and the White House.
- Coordinate potential designation and routing of bicycle trails within the corridor with other planning initiatives such as the Metropolitan Branch Trail and Anacostia Waterfront Initiative.
- Investigate the need for and, where needed, provide bicycle parking and temporary locker facilities.
- Explore the feasibility and sources of funding for designation, design, and implementation of the entire length of the Pennsylvania Avenue as an officially designated bikeway.
- Develop and disseminate promotional materials and maps for pedestrian use. Such materials should focus on interesting places in each byway segment and, as appropriate, include information about local retail establishments or commercial areas providing visitor services. These materials should be available at hotels, information kiosks, convention and meeting locations, and bus and trains stations.
- In coordination with heritage tourism organizations, promote walking tours of areas within or near the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor.



Improve access to waterfront trails from the Sousa Bridge



Enhance Bike Trails within the Corridor

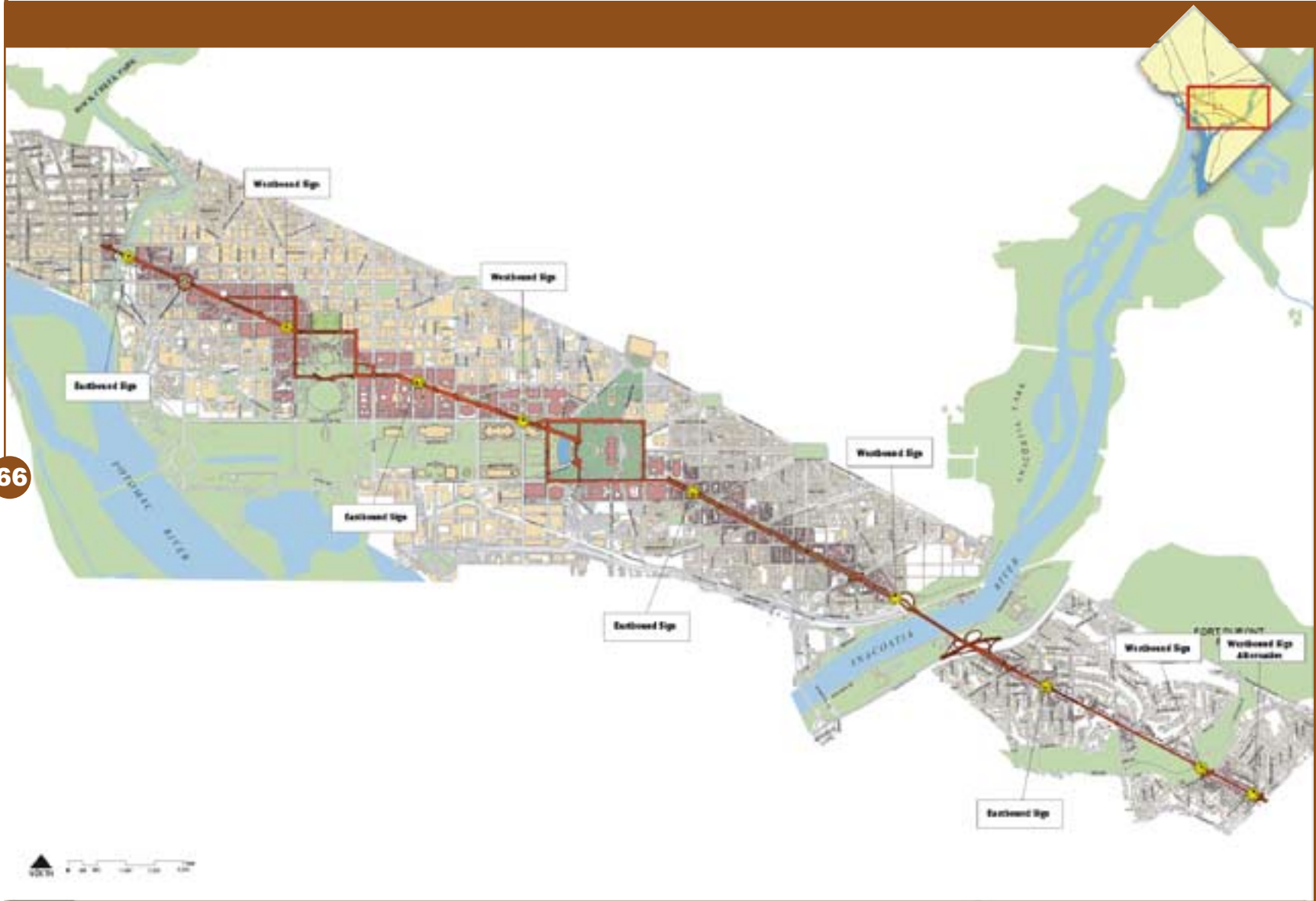


Fig. 4-3 **SIGNAGE PLAN**

4 The Component Plans Commerce and Facilities Plan

Plan for Managing Development

To a large extent, the framework for managing development is already in place. Each of the byway Planning Partners described in Chapter Two has its own review mechanisms for activities within its jurisdiction.

It is anticipated that designation of Pennsylvania Avenue as an All-American Road would not induce much additional traffic, nor is it likely to have a growth-inducing effect along the byway. Designation and plan implementation would not interfere with existing commercial traffic or access to businesses. No major additional services for the traveler are proposed. The District Department of Transportation and the byway management organization will review and institute measures as part of normal city road maintenance to help ensure the safety of sightseers in personal vehicles, as well as bicycles and pedestrians.

Signage Plan

The entire length of Pennsylvania Avenue is saturated with existing signs. Nearly every lamp post and utility pole has some sort of sign on it, mostly providing parking information. Additional signs provide directional information: One Way, Do Not Enter, Downtown Washington, Snow Emergency Route, MCI Center, Eastern Market, Stadium Armory, and AMTRAK, to name just a few. In addition, large signs on the John Philip Sousa Bridge announce access to the Anacostia and Southeast Freeways. The Avenue's intersection with Minnesota Avenue SE appears particularly cluttered, partly because a number of streets intersect with the Avenue in this area.

Nevertheless, the Avenue should be identified to travelers as a scenic byway. These signs should be kept to a minimum. For vehicles, a pair of signs is recommended at a minimum for each segment of the byway - one for westbound traffic and

one for eastbound traffic. Where possible, the byway sign should be located near a significant vista or place that reinforces the Pennsylvania Avenue themes. For example, East of the River, west-bound, the sign could be located just over the crest of the hill, where the Capitol building firsts comes into view. A byway sign at this location would serve as a visual explanation for why the Avenue is designated a scenic byway. Signs are also important at the "gateway" locations. Near the Maryland state line, a scenic byway sign could be installed after the directional sign indicating "Downtown Washington" on the right-hand side of the Avenue.

Any signs marking the Scenic Byway, and any developed to identify or interpret corridor resources should be consistent in hardware and message design with the city's new wayfinding sign system. The one exception to this rule would be any new signs that the National Park Service might develop to be consistent with their existing sign designs.

For pedestrians, informational and direction signs should be placed at locations that would support pedestrian use of the byway, as recommended under the Multi-Modal Plan. Such signage would help pedestrians and bicyclists find their way along the non-contiguous portions of the byway, such as Independence and Constitution Avenues, the walkways through the Capitol grounds, or along 15th and 17th Streets, NW.

Compliance with Outdoor Advertising Laws

At the federal level, the Highway Beautification Act of 1965 (23 USC 131) controls outdoor advertising on Interstates and other roadways. A section of this act permits the existence of signs lawfully in existence on October 22, 1965, as determined by the state (District). An amendment to this act applies to state scenic byway programs.



Example of an Informative Sign



Example of a Wayfinding Sign



Existing 'Welcome to Washington' sign at the MD State Line (Pennsylvania Avenue SE)



Existing Wayfinding Signs could be enhanced with a Byways logo and identification of nearby resources

The District of Columbia has a long-standing tradition of banning billboard advertising. The District zoning regulations prohibit billboards in historic districts and in the central business district. Erection of a billboard elsewhere requires a permit administered by the District Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, and the billboard must comply with size restrictions; presently, the District has a moratorium on erecting new billboards. There are no billboards along Pennsylvania Avenue, and this plan supports continued strict controls of outdoor advertising within the corridor.

Recommendations

- Pennsylvania Avenue Scenic Byway signs should be placed strategically along the byway to be readable travelers in vehicles, on bicycles, or on foot. These signs should direct byway users along the route and, in the vicinity of the Capitol and White House, help direct users back onto Pennsylvania Avenue from other streets. These signs also should be consistent in hardware and message design with the city's new wayfinding sign system.
- Identify which byway resources on or near the byway need directional signs. Design, fabricate and install these directional signs, keeping them consistent in hardware and message design with the city's new wayfinding sign system
- Identify the Pennsylvania Avenue Scenic Byway on existing kiosks.
- Develop and place informational and direction signs at locations that would support pedestrian use of the byway. This is important in directing pedestrians along the non-contiguous portions of the Byway such as Independence and Constitution Avenues, the walkways through the Capitol grounds, or along 15th and 17th Streets, NW.

- Develop and place signs for assisting pedestrians on other walkways, such as along the National Mall, in reaching Pennsylvania Avenue. Such signage can be done in coordination of design and placement of signage for directing bicyclists for the same purposes.

Suggested Vehicle Byway Sign Locations			
Byway Segment	Travel Direction	Location on Pennsylvania Avenue	Jurisdiction
West End	East-bound	Immediately west of Meigs Bridge over Rock Creek 1900 block NW	DDOT NPS
West End	West-bound	West of the White House (1700 block NW) 2400 block NW	DDOT
Monumental Core	East-bound	400 or 600 block NW 1400 block NW	DDOT NPS
Monumental Core	West-bound	400 block NW 1200 block	NPS DDOT, AOC
Capitol Hill	East-bound	300 block SE (outside AOC jurisdiction) 1000 block SE	DDOT NPS
Capitol Hill	West-bound	Barney Circle (west of Sousa Bridge,1600 block SE) 700 block SE	DDOT NPS
East of the River	East-bound	At L'Enfant Park 2800 block SE	DDOT
East of the River	West-bound	Crest of the hill, west of Alabama Avenue SE Immediately west of MD state line (Southern Ave SE)	DDOT NPS